

## COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR IMPROVING KIDNEY FUNCTION

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Materials and methods for improving kidney function or enhancing proliferation or survival of kidney tubule epithelial cells or epithelial cell precursors in a mammal are disclosed. The methods comprise administering to the mammal a composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a zveg4 protein or a zveg4 protein-encoding polynucleotide in combination with a pharmaceutically acceptable delivery vehicle. Zveg4 proteins include, for example, disulfide-bonded dimers of two polypeptide chains, each comprising residues 258-370 of SEQ ID NO:2.